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IN THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AT FRANKLIN, N. H.,

JANUARY 4TH, 1872,

AT THE FUNERAL SERVICES OF

MRS. MARY LANGDON SAVAGE,

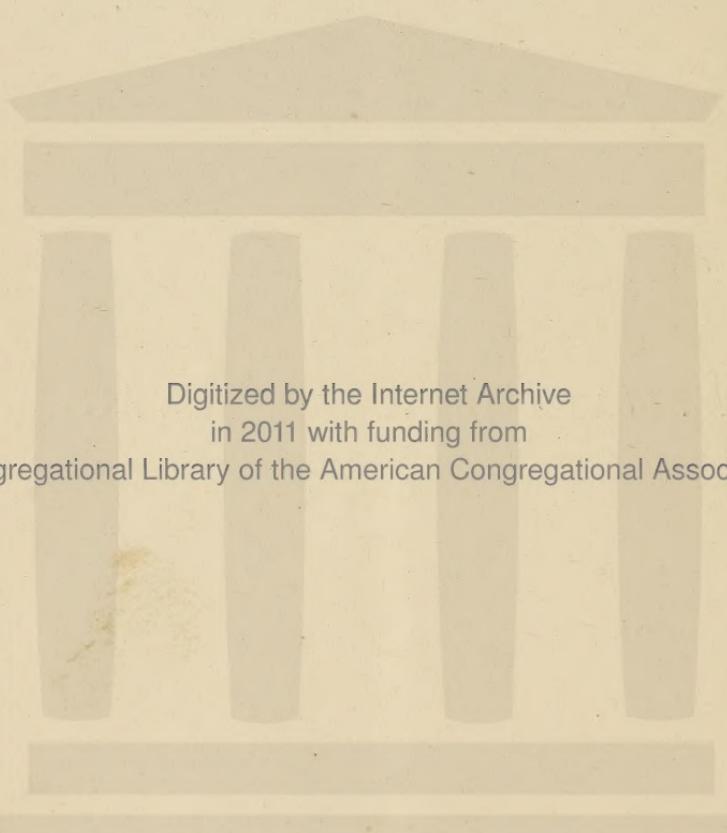
WIFE OF THE REV. WM. T. SAVAGE, D. D.

BY

REV. HENRY E. PARKER,

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A D D R E S S.

IN the 2d Epistle by John, and in the first clause, is this expression: “THE ELECT LADY.”

Not until Christianity had come was woman thus addressed. Christianity only gave to man such refinement as disposed him to address woman alike with a dignity befitting him and a respect due to her; and Christianity only so elevated woman as to merit every noble word man’s heart could prompt and his tongue could frame. And who should have such courtly phrase as this—“the elect lady”—if not she whom God hath endowed with his grace, enriched with the gifts of his own likeness, and whose feminine loveliness, whether of mien or mind, of lineaments or soul, he has crowned with the excellency of piety, the present twilight yet dawning radiance of which betokens an approaching full-orbed brightness of heaven’s day and heaven’s glory?

Dwell, for a moment, on this, to the believer, sweet gospel word, “the elect;” not as theological disputants sometimes debate upon it, distorting its application

and disfiguring its beauty ; no, no ! but as you find it written again and again, so often, in the gospels and epistles of the New Testament,—the elect of God, God's chosen ; his choice ones as well as chosen ; for reasons, however hidden to us, good and satisfactory to him, chosen in the divine and loving thoughts of the earliest eternity of God's unbeginning being ; chosen when time and earth were not, and when they came to be ; chosen out of all the sons and daughters of men ; chosen out of our sinful and so justly doomed race ; chosen to receive what the love of God could give, what his power could most and his wisdom best bestow ; chosen to be united to God himself, to share his love, to be not unworthy of it, to lean upon his arm, to have his protection and his guidance, to have his sweetest words to counsel, to comfort, and to gladden, to be never separated from him, to be exalted one day at his right hand to a queenly place and participation in honors and glories divinely great and beatific.

And who was this Christian woman, this “elect lady,” thus highly addressed in this letter of St. John ? Was it she, “blessed among women,” commended to the beloved disciple’s care by his dying Lord from the cross ? What earlier Monica, mother of Augustine, or martyr Blandina, Perpetua, or Felicitas, did he honor with this more than royal title ? It is not told us. Perhaps the titled address, “the elect lady,”

this only, was given that it be the more readily attached to many another to whom it as truly and honorably belongs. Yes, to that saintly Christian mother of yours and mine it rightfully belongs. So does it to that godly, beloved companion of yours and mine. So does it to that dear and pious sister of yours and mine. So does it to that fondly-cherished Christian child of yours and mine. So, too, did it belong, so does it belong, to the now silent, the urned and coffined one before you. "The elect lady"—so may we speak of her also. Chosen of God, such she was. Selected of him for an especial place and influence in life. So, as related to this choice divine, we may interestingly view the whole arrangement of the circumstances of her earliest as well as later life. It was this that located her childhood's years in that fair town of southern Maine, with its picturesque surroundings of hill and dale, wood and stream, pasture-land and pleasant fields, early developing that trait of hers, that love of the Creator's handiwork displayed in nature's beauties and sublimities. It was the same chosen ordering which gave her the father strong in mind as in character, and the mother (that one who in all households has the chief part in forming the habits and character of the youthful ones), the mother of rare refinement and grace, and piety serene and spiritual. It was the same which made her one in that numerous circle of brothers and sisters of

* characteristics such as to develop a family life eminent and full, and to deepen in interest and attachment as the years should grow. So, too, it was the same divine preferment that gave her the advantages of a superior education, securing that mind developed, disciplined, and admirably stored. It was that which gave the bright mental parts, the originality and grasp of thought, the strong memory, the quick wit, and the fine fancy whose brilliancy fitted so well the naturally sunny disposition and cheerful spirit. It was the same which bestowed those gifts of conversation and of pen, and those graces of a womanhood rich and rare; the same which gave those spheres of influence, in the circle of kindred and acquaintance, as a member of society, as a writer, a teacher, a pastor's wife, and the invalid of many years, who could give grace and dignity to sickness itself, while ever gaining from it more than it took away. It was the exalting, preferring choice of God which assigned those various fields of action, endurance, and influence for her to fill so well.

But, while saying thus much, to say nothing further would be but to make the election of God only synonymous with his providence, while, including this, it is much more; it especially and most includes the bestowment of that grace which of one of the children of men makes a child of God. It was this which most made her all she was; since it was the

mainspring of her life, the controller, director, and end of all her powers and gifts. For the possession of all endowments without this grace of God, without piety, what is it? A plant it may be, of branch and leaf, but that becomes not crowned with bloom and fruitage: a meteor, perhaps very dazzling, momentarily, in the sky, but no planet ever enlivening the heavens and permanently sending down to earth its genial rays: a vessel, full-rigged and sails wide spread on life's sea, but with no helm guiding upon a useful voyage and to a desired haven. It was the eminent character God gave her,—her Christian spirit and character perfecting all native endowments, touching with a super-added charm all natural gifts and graces, giving, while to the heart humility, yet to the life the loftiest purpose; giving to her home-life a sacred charm, to her social life a sweet sanctity, and irradiating her path, wherever she moved, with goodness, worth, and usefulness; which welcomed all duty and self-denial if only others could be benefited and the will of God be done; which hailed as guests for long, long years, debility and disease, infirmity and suffering, if only the soul could be perfected and God be glorified; which robbed dying days of their fears and repellent things, nay, which clad them in bridal robes both pure and glad; which enabled her, like another Mary, to take her place at Jesus' feet and listen to his words, those only—her dear Lord's name so

precious, all in all; to use her own expression, "the name of Christ was a password to everything"—for life, for the otherwise dark valley, and at the pearly gates;—it was this heavenly grace, renewing, sanctifying, emphatically this, coming from a source divine, and leading to results more than human merely, which justifies us in our tribute as we take the Apostle's words and say, "The lady elect of God."

And now, what does this same phrase, uttered as it needs should be, with reverent lip, further bid us say? In bitterness of heart, that we shall no more look upon the beloved pastor's wife, her, the high-souled, yet the meek and gentle? no more listen to her quickening thought and pleasant words? no more be delighted and improved by that culture which was not more of manners than of mind? no more enjoy the influence of that life so redolent with every sweet which intelligence and piety exhale, an influence which, though to so great an extent emanating from the sick-room, the rule rather than the exception in her pain-harassed life, nevertheless was possibly purer, more powerful and permanent than though proceeding from the most vigorous every-day, out-door presence? Shall we thus, in unabated sorrow, speak only of our loss? No, no! God's elect never die. All that she was among you will still live. The life she here led before you in its simplicity and Christian sincerity, its blamelessness and goodness, these many years, will

still remain. What she held up before you as worthy of attainment and pursuit, and which she herself exemplified, you cannot readily forget. Those unrealized longings to do you good, and those many prayers for you in that long-forced retirement, are ever before God for you; and the long years of that sick-room, even—their quiet, their seclusion, their hallowed scenes, though of suffering—will be like an ever-recurring, ever-abiding Sabbath influence among you. Oh! no, no, no! This pallid form, mutely confessing that, in the long-protracted struggle between disease and it, the former has been at last triumphant, is, oh! how inferior a part of the story of her life! The words we have taken from the Apostle are its epitome, very brief, but very blessed—“The elect lady!” And, oh, see! they lift the heavy veil between us and the dear departed, and they bid you look into that upper world and behold her now in the radiant ranks of those “who have come out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;” while upon her crown there is an inscription like one which is upon her Redeemer’s also—“Perfect through sufferings.”

Ah, dear friends, is there one of us that does not feel called upon to say, in this solemn presence, this sacred precious presence of the remains of her whom you esteemed and loved so well,—is there one of us that does not feel called upon to say, “her God shall

be my God," "the Christian's Saviour shall be my Saviour," "the life of the Christian, God helping me, shall be mine," "and let a life of suffering and self-denial be allotted me also, only, Lord, grant that my name may be written among thy chosen"?

Oh, if we could but lay this offering upon her tomb, how much better than any garlands of perishing flowers! how much sweeter to that departed spirit, if permitted of her God to know that her death was made even more blessed than her life in promoting your eternal good!

And now, O dear and ransomed spirit,
Most safe, most blessed, through Jesus' merit!
No longer earthly pain or sin doth grieve thee;
Home at last, in Heaven's palaces we leave thee.

APPENDIX.

MARY LANGDON SAVAGE, eldest daughter of JEREMIAH BRADBURY, Esq., and MARY LANGDON (STORER), his wife, was born April 2, 1817, at York, Maine; her father being then Collector of United States Customs at that port. When she was two years of age he removed to Alfred, the shire town of York county, where she was brought up with rare domestic culture, in the midst of rural beauties and intelligent society. She became one of a delightful circle of young ladies, and grace and loveliness were poured upon her.

At the age of thirteen years she consecrated herself to Christ, and, August 1, 1830, united with the Congregational church, then under the pastoral care of Rev. Daniel D. Tappan. In addition to the facilities afforded by the schools and academy at Alfred, her education was pursued in seminaries at Ipswich, Mass., and Portland, Me. Her stores of knowledge became extensive and choice; her mind was naturally well poised and bright; and she advanced to exert an influence at once electric and beneficent.

On the morning of April 5, 1841, she was married to Rev. WILLIAM T. SAVAGE, then recently installed pastor of the Congregational church, at Amherst, N. H. After a residence there of a few years, at a time characterized by extreme light and shade, she escaped with her husband to the wilderness, and for five years resided at Houlton, a

frontier town in northern Maine, then garrisoned by United States troops, where her aid and comfort were beautifully given in laying the foundations of religion and education.

In the spring of 1849 she was transferred to Franklin, N. H., where, at "the meeting of the waters" forming the Merrimack, she lived for nearly twenty-two years, a fount of inspiration, a center of joy.

When abroad, at Paris, in the year 1867, the malady appeared that closed her earthly life. Arrested in her travels by the disease, she returned home and sought to stop its progress, but in vain. In the spring of 1871, it had seriously impaired her strength, and from that time it proceeded due on to the end. She was confined successively to her home, her chamber, her bed; and when physical strength had departed, the mind continued beautifully clear and vigorous. She was long detained on the border line of earth, in full view of the eternal world. Rejecting the illusions and sophistries of Naturalism, so pervading the literature of the day, she relied alone on Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and found peace. Without rapture and without fear, she trusted to his loving intervention and assurances of aid, and, though self-distrustful, was serene and happy. On Wednesday, from the advance of the disease, her mind began to waver; and on the following Monday, January 1st, at eight o'clock in the morning, her ardent desire was realized, and she was permitted to join the society of her three children, and her sainted parents and friends, gone before; to become associated with the great company of choice and faithful ones, gathered from different lands, whom she desired to know, and to enter on the unhindered activities of her everlasting rest. Happy indeed for her that New Year's morn! but, in the bereavement of her departure, alas for friends left behind! In the changed situation, and with the hope of reunion, they sadly realize the significance of her own words:

"REPOS AILLEURS."

"Not here, on this poor planet, tempest-riven,
 Rent with out-bursting fires and earthquake throes,
 Its ever-restless ocean booming loud,—
 Not here, in this wild scene, expect repose.

"Not here, though Nature hath her quiet powers,
 When bright and calm she basks in summer light;
 Yet fast, too fast, day drops her golden hours,
 And all too soon glooms down the dreary night.

"Not here, not here, hope thou to find repose,
 Although thou leanest on the Saviour's breast;
 Though he uplift the burden of thy woes,
 And thou hast peace,—yet here thou may'st not rest:

"Only a snatch of slumber, here and there,
 To give thee strength to labor for the right;
 Earth must be won to God; and *soldiers know*,
 To win the victory, sore must be the fight.

"*Repos Ailleurs*?"* Oh! mystic words and dear,—
 Dear to the heart, when pressed with toil and care:
 Hurried with life, we ask not when or how,
 But grasp the cheering thought—Repose elsewhere!"

The services of the funeral occasion were as follows:

There was prayer at the parsonage, the residence of the deceased, by the Rev. A. W. Fiske, of Fisherville, who, thirty years before, had officiated at the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. S.; after which the relatives and neighbors proceeded to the Congregational church, which was filled with a concourse of citizens and sympathizing friends. As the dear dead was borne into the church by the bearers—

* Philipp van Marnix, Lord of St. Aldegonde, was an intimate friend of William of Orange, and one of the most beautiful characters of his time. "Repos Ailleurs" was the legend worn upon his shield.—See Prescott's *Philip II.*

Messrs. A. F. Pike, Barnard, Goodwin, E. C. Stone, D. S. Gilchrist, Neal, and W. B. Wadsworth—the choir impressively rendered the plaintive chant:

“Gone home! she lingers here no longer.”

When the casket had been disposed in front of the pulpit and decorated with floral cross and wreaths, under the direction of N. H. Sanborn, Esq., favorite stanzas of the old hymn by Quarles were read by Rev. Mr. Ayer, of Concord, and sung:

“O mother dear, Jerusalem,
When shall I come to thee?” &c.

Appropriate and touching selections from the Scriptures were read by Rev. Dr. Bouton, when the preceding address was given by Rev. Professor Parker, who also led the deeply impressed audience in tender and devout prayer.

The choir sang the hymn,

“My days are gliding swiftly by,”

to the tune of “Shining Shore,” and the benediction was pronounced by Rev. Wm. R. Jewett, of Fisherville. After the congregation had glanced at the once animated form, it was borne away to the beautiful cemetery on the hill rising between the rivers, where it was committed to its mother earth with the accompanying words by Rev. Professor Parker: “And now, since it hath pleased Almighty God to remove from us our dear departed friend, we reverently consign these decaying fleshly remains to their kindred clay; earth to earth, dust to dust, to slumber till the resurrection morn:—but the spirit has gone to God who gave it; and when the Archangel’s trump shall sound, and all the dead shall rise, we believe that that spirit shall be re-clad in glorious form like unto our Saviour’s own resurrection body, thenceforward forever to enjoy the blessedness of heaven, through riches of grace alone in Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The Benediction concluded.

Here the voices of the uniting rivers will sing her requiem,
while the varied seasons shall continue their march and the
successive years of earth shall roll around.

“ What joy if we may reach the strand
Which the dear dead have trod,
And walk with them the golden streets,
The city of our God.”

Never were kindnesses more fully or delicately bestowed
than those accorded by a sympathizing people to the afflicted
family. They can not be forgotten. W. T. S.

